

\$1,500.00 PRIZE WINNERS ANNOUNCED!

AUTHORIZED
A. C. M. P.

CONFORMS
to the
COMICS
CODE

BLACK



10¢

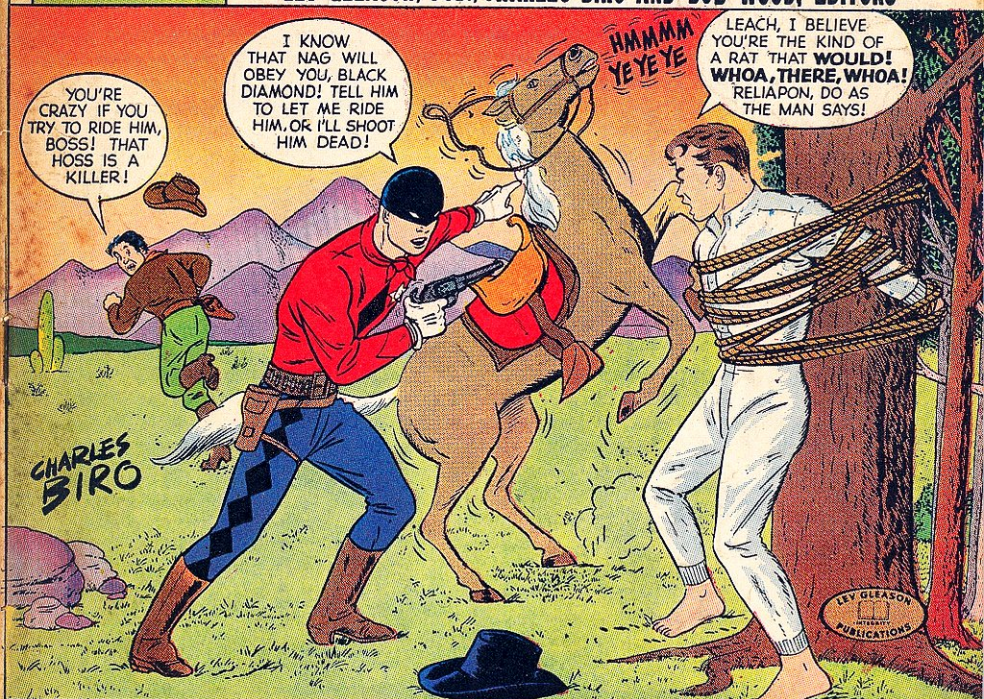
DIAMOND

WESTERN

SEPT.
NO. 15

FULL
52 pages of
ILLUSTORIES

LEV GLEASON, PUB., CHARLES BIRO AND BOB WOOD, EDITORS



Who is the merciless desperado that had a whole Western town in a grip of terror? What happens when the Black Diamond is faced with the horrible choice of sacrificing his best friend, his horse Reliapon, or aiding a vicious killer in his murderous schemes! See inside!



WEB COMIC UNIVERSE.COM

**IF YOU
CAN WHISTLE-
or
HUM A TUNE-**

"HOPPY" WILL SHOW YOU HOW TO PLAY THIS METAL

HARMONICA

In 15 Minutes — Or Money Back



SENT ON SEVEN DAY APPROVAL

Learn to play in a day or it costs you nothing! We make this daring offer to every man or woman, boy or girl who enjoys music and who would like to play the harmonica. Now, for the first time, you can get a nationally advertised, genuine metal professional harmonica, and receive as a gift Hoppy's new method for playing it. Along with the music and the words to 200 of your favorite songs — songs that were selected so that you can sing and play right along with your favorite radio program or records. Expert harmonica players will tell you that the best harmonicas are the easiest ones to play. The harmonica you receive in this amazing offer is the full size metal professional model of the very finest quality. It comes in the Key of C so that you can accompany any other music. Each metal reed is individually tuned and tested. You cannot buy a harmonica with finer workmanship, no matter how much you pay. Hoppy's new discovery for showing you how to play makes it as simple as ABC and it's lots of fun. *Anyone who can whistle or hum a tune — and count up to ten can learn so quickly that it is unbelievable!* Most people say that this amazing method itself is worth the \$1.69 price of the harmonica! Order your harmonica now while this introductory offer is being made. Remember, Hoppy guarantees that you will soon be playing song hits of all kinds or your money back!

IN THIS

AMAZING INTRODUCTORY OFFER

You get all this for only \$1.69!

- Nationally Advertised Harmonica with True Tone Metal Reed
- Hoppy's New Method of Instruction for Harmonica
- Words and Music of 200 Songs Chosen for Radio Popularity



IT'S EASY TO PLAY, AND YOU GET THIS FINE, FULL SIZE HARMONICA, HOPPY'S NEW METHOD OF INSTRUCTION, AND WORDS AND MUSIC OF 200 SONGS. — ALL FOR ONLY \$1.69



ONLY \$1.69 FOR ALL THAT? BOY, I'M SURE GOING TO SEND FOR IT RIGHT AWAY!



**HOPKINSON HARMONICA CO., Dept. 203
1101 N. PAULINA ST., CHICAGO 22, ILLINOIS**

Rush my genuine Key of C Professional Metal Harmonica and Hoppy's Complete Book of Instructions along with the music and words of 200 songs to me at once. On arrival I will deposit just \$1.69 plus postage. If in 7 days I am not thrilled and delighted I may return purchase for my money back.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

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Just send your name and address on penny postcard. Your beautiful Key of C professional metal Harmonica and Hoppy's Complete Book of Instructions and 200 Songs will be mailed at once. On arrival, pay postman just \$1.69 plus C.O.D. and postage. Keep for 7 days on free trial offer. If you are not satisfied, return and your money will be refunded at once. Supplies are limited. Don't risk disappointment. Order now—TODAY!

**HOPKINSON HARMONICA CO., Dept. 203,
1101 N. Paulina St., Chicago 22, Illinois**

the BLACK DIAMOND

IN THE DAYS OF THE DESPERADOES!

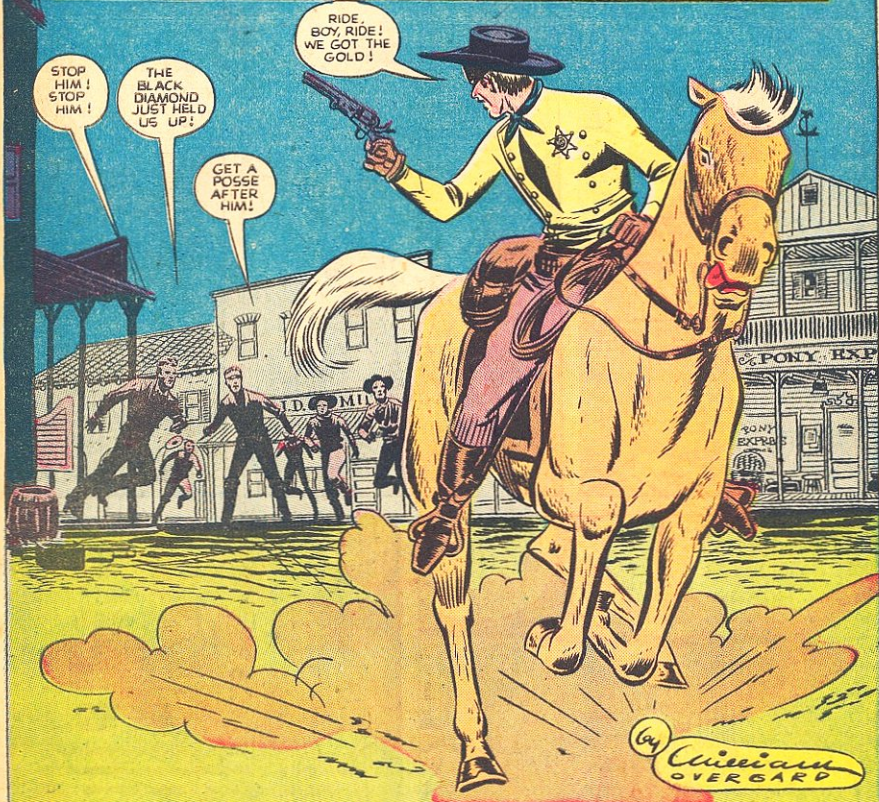
NOBODY WAS MORE VICIOUS OR HATED IN THE WEST THAN THE CLAIM-JUMPER! HE STOPPED AT NOTHING TO STEAL ANOTHER MAN'S HARD-EARNED GOLD! SUCH A MAN WAS "LUCKY" LEACH, WHOSE GREED FOR GAMBLING DROVE HIM TO KILL ONE MAN AND FRAME ANOTHER IN A SCRAMBLE FOR GAMBLER'S GOLD!

RIDE,
BOY, RIDE!
WE GOT THE
GOLD!

STOP
HIM!
STOP
HIM!

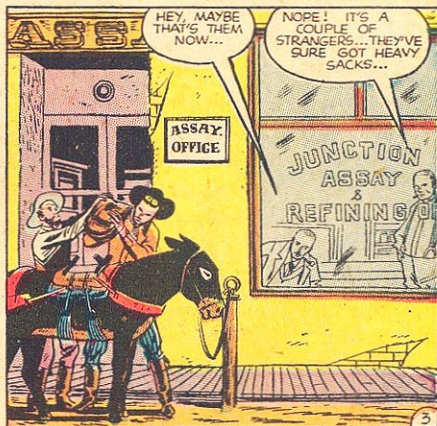
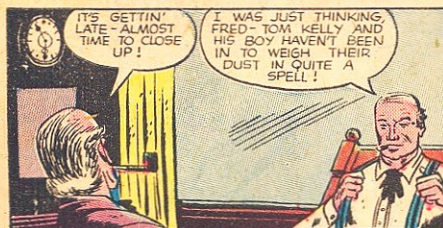
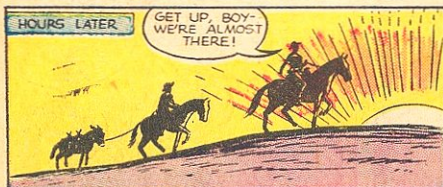
THE
BLACK
DIAMOND
JUST HELD
US UP!

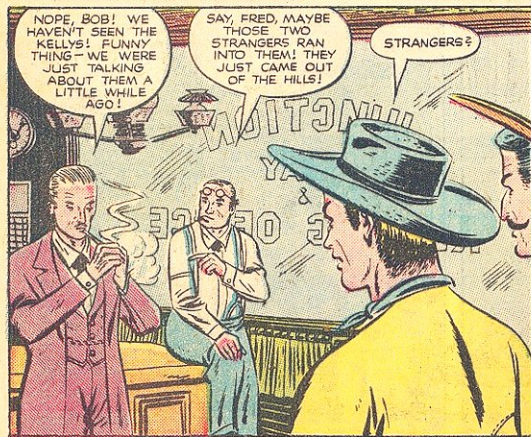
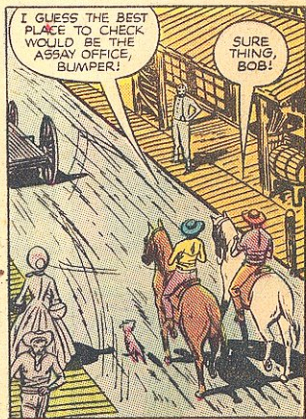
GET A
POSSE
AFTER
HIM!



WHAT STRANGE CHANGE OF EVENTS SEEMINGLY TURNS THE BLACK DIAMOND INTO A WANTED CRIMINAL, RIDING BRAZENLY AWAY FROM JUNCTION WITH ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS--IN STOLEN GOLD?

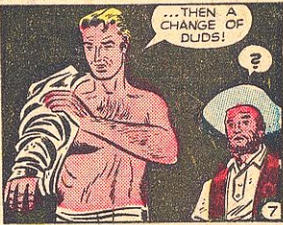
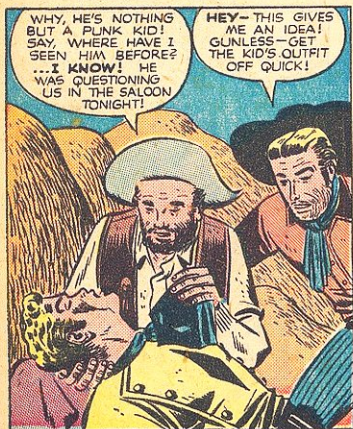
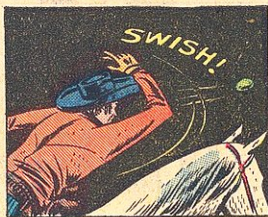
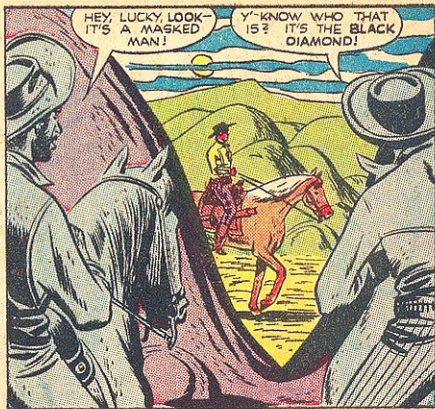




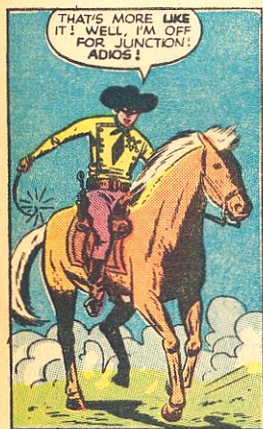




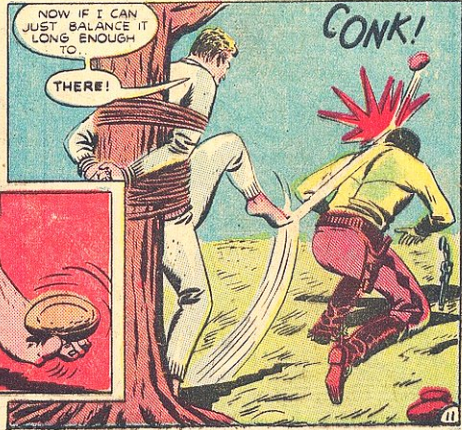
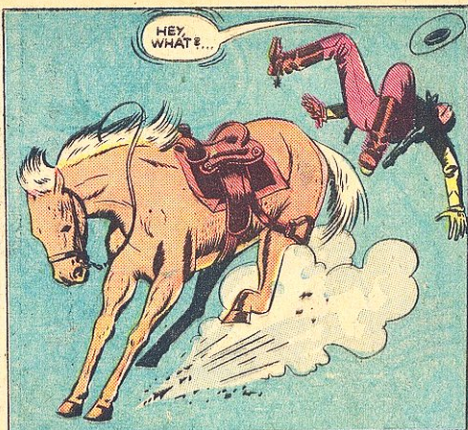






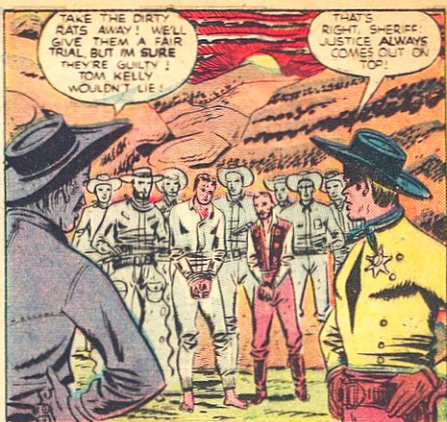






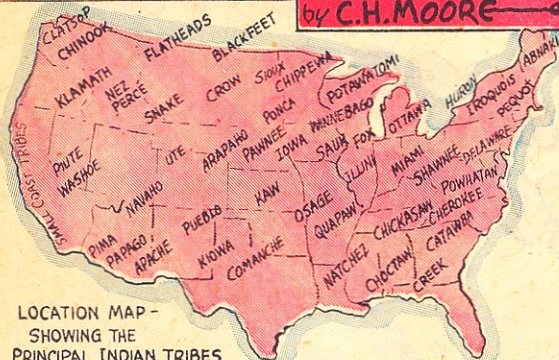






STRAIGHT AS AN ARROW!

by C.H. MOORE



LOCATION MAP -
SHOWING THE
PRINCIPAL INDIAN TRIBES

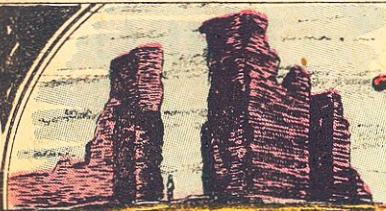
WHEN THE WHITE MEN FIRST EXPLORED AMERICA!
THE INDIAN POPULATION WAS CALCULATED TO BE 1,500,000!



THE FLATHEAD INDIANS

REALLY HAD FLAT HEADS!
A BOARD WAS TIGHTLY BOUND TO THE HEAD OF EVERY BABY OF THE TRIBE FOR THE FIRST YEAR OF HIS LIFE - THIS CAUSED THE SKULL TO GROW FLAT ON TOP AND STAY THAT WAY FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES!

C.H. MOORE 5947



RUINS OF THE ABO MISSION -

THE MYSTERY OF NEW MEXICO -
NO ONE KNOWS WHEN - HOW - WHY
OR BY WHOM THE BUILDINGS WERE ERECTED!
EVEN THE INDIANS OF THIS TERRITORY
CAN SHED NO LIGHT ON THE MYSTERY
OF THE RUINS OF ABO!



THE WAR CLUB
WAS A FAVORITE
WEAPON OF THE
INDIANS BEFORE
THE TOMAHAWK!
IT WAS MADE
OF IRONWOOD!



THE MOHAVE INDIANS
CREMATED THEIR DEAD AND
BURNED EVERY POSSESSION
OF THE DECEASED (INCLUDING
HIS HOUSE) SO THAT HE WOULD
HAVE THEM IN THE SPIRIT WORLD!

BY
CUTTING
NOTCHES
INTO
THE
SHAFT
OF THE
ARROW,
THE INDIANS
CONTROLLED
THE WAY
IN WHICH THE
FLAT HEAD OF AN
ARROW ENTERED
ITS TARGET
- HORIZONTALLY
OR VERTICALLY!



THE YUOK INDIANS HAD TO BUY THEIR
WIVES - IF A WIFE DIED BEFORE A
NORMAL LIFE SPAN - HER FAMILY HAD
TO SUPPLY THE HUSBAND WITH ANOTHER
WIFE TO TAKE HER PLACE!
(A SISTER OR NEAR RELATIVE)

FIRE YOUR OWN V-2 MODEL ROCKET

JET PROPULSION!

This rocket uses actual jet principles. Will help you to learn the secrets behind inter-planetary flights. Extra rocket charges come with every rocket. You can always obtain more, so that you can experiment again and again.

SOARS
OVER
200 FT.
IN THE
AIR!

COMPLETE
WITH SPECIAL
LAUNCHING
STAND, EXTRA
ROCKET CHARGES
AND FULL
INSTRUCTIONS
FOR OPERATION

\$1.98

A NEW THRILL!

There's a new thrill coming as you send a real rocket soaring up high into the sky. It zooms up from its launching stand, but is absolutely harmless. Drops safely, cannot injure anyone, and you can fire them over and over, having fun or experimenting seriously. For only \$1.98 your rocket comes equipped, ready to fly, with special launching stand, extra rocket charges and full instructions on how to make your rocket zoom over 200 feet into the sky.

SEND NO MONEY

When payment is sent with order, we pay postage. Or send no money and pay postman \$1.98 plus mailing costs. Just mail the handy order coupon below. Your rocket will be shipped to you immediately.

SEND NO MONEY! Rush This Coupon

EMPIRE MERCHANDISING CO., Dept. J-21
63-E Central Avenue, Ossining, N. Y.

Gentlemen: Rush me the V-2 model rocket set at only \$1.98

I enclose payment Send C.O.D.

Name _____

Street _____

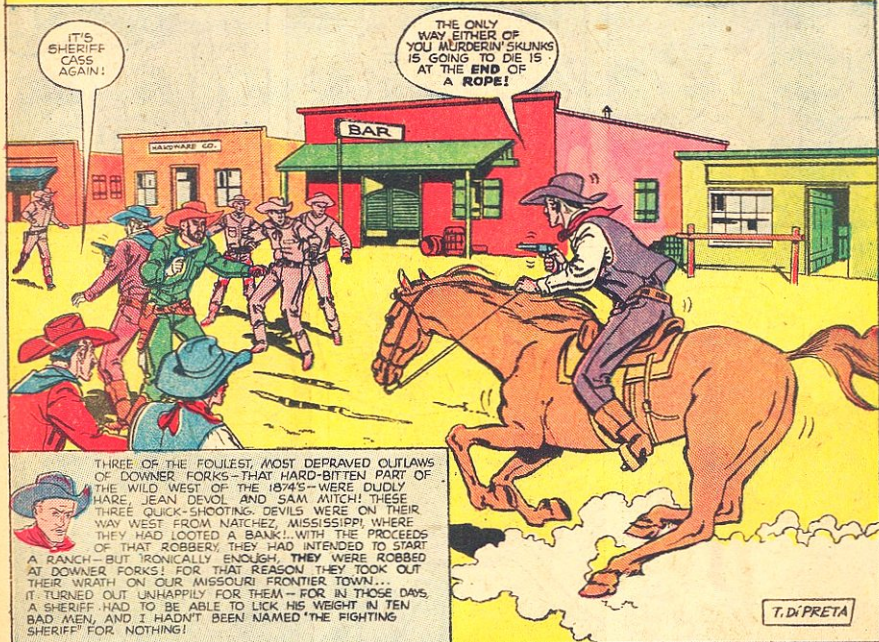
City _____ State _____

EMPIRE MERCHANDISING CO., Dept. J2
63-E CENTRAL AVENUE, OSSINING, NEW YORK

SHERIFF CASS BROUGHT JUSTICE TO DOWNER
FORKS AND ENDED THE RUTHLESS CAREER OF

MAD DUD HARE

THE TERROR OF MISSOURI!!



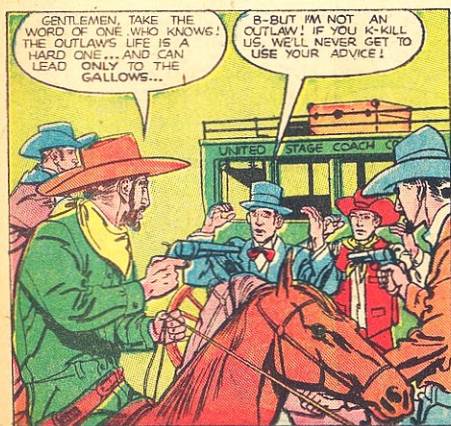
IT'S
SHERIFF
CASS
AGAIN!

THE ONLY
WAY EITHER OF
YOU MURDERIN' SKUNKS
IS GOING TO DIE IS
AT THE END OF
A ROPE!



THREE OF THE FOULEST, MOST DEPRAVED OUTLAWS OF DOWNER FORKS—THAT HARD-BITTEN PART OF THE WILD WEST OF THE 1840'S—WERE DUDLY HARE, JEAN DEVIL AND SAM MITCH. THESE THREE QUICK-SHOOTING DEVILS WERE ON THEIR WAY WEST FROM NATCHEZ, MISSISSIPPI WHERE THEY HAD LOOTED A BANK! WITH THE PROCEEDS OF THAT ROBBERY, THEY HAD INTENDED TO START A RANCH—BUT IRONICALLY ENOUGH, THEY WERE ROBBED AT DOWNER FORKS! FOR THAT REASON THEY TOOK OUT THEIR WRATH ON OUR MISSOURI FRONTIER TOWN... IT TURNED OUT UNHAPPY FOR THEM—FOR IN THOSE DAYS, A SHERIFF HAD TO BE ABLE TO LICK HIS WEIGHT IN TEN BAD MEN, AND I HADN'T BEEN NAMED 'THE FIGHTING SHERIFF' FOR NOTHING!

T. DiPRETA



GENTLEMEN, TAKE THE WORD OF ONE WHO KNOWS! THE OUTLAWS LIFE IS A HARD ONE... AND CAN LEAD ONLY TO THE GALLOWES...

B-BUT I'M NOT AN OUTLAW! IF YOU K-KILL US, WE'LL NEVER GET TO USE YOUR ADVICE!



TRUE! I HADN'T THOUGHT OF THAT! WELL... LET'S BE DONE WITH 'EM, BOYS!

P-PLEASE... I HAVE A FAMILY SIR! YOU'VE GOT MY MONEY!

SAVE YOUR BREATH FOR PRAYIN' MISTER! THAT'S DUD HARE! THE MOST MURDERIN' OUTLAW THESE HILLS EVER SAW!





MY BLASTED MASK DROPPED! NOW THEY KNOW WHO WE ARE!

THAT ISN'T SO, SAM! THEY KNOW YOU - ME AND JEAN ARE IN THE CLEAR!



BUT YOU'RE GOIN' TO STICK WITH ME, AREN'T YOU? I'LL KEEP OUT OF SIGHT TILL YOU'RE READY TO HEAD BACK WEST!

SURE, SAM - WE'LL STICK JUST AS LONG AS YA KEEP YOUR NOSE OUT OF NATCHEZ, OR YOU'LL GET US HANGED!



SHE'S STILL HERE AND STANDIN'! THE UGLY PLACE HASN'T CHANGED!

YEAH, IT'S JUST AS DIRTY AND DAMP AS THE DAY WE FIRST LEFT THESE PARTS...



I RECKON YOU'LL HAVE TO STAY HERE AN' LIKE IT, SAM! WE'LL BE AROUND ENOUGH TO SEE YA DON'T GET LONELY!

I DON'T CARE, JUST AS LONG AS WE GET MOVIN' BEFORE TOO LONG!



ONLY FOUR THOUSAND DOLLARS - A BLAME, SIGHT LESS THAN WE NEED FOR A GOOD STAKE! SAM, I CAN'T SAY HOW LONG WE'RE GOIN' TO BE HERE, BUT WE AREN'T LEAVIN' TILL WE'RE READY!

BUT YA ADMIT BEIN' AFRAID OF THE LAW, DUD!



YEP, SCARED TO DEATH! IF I HAD A GRAIN OF SENSE, I'D GET OUT NOW - BUT I HAVEN'T! I HERE TAKE 'YOUR CUTS'. DON'T SQUANDER IT AWAY OR I'LL BE GOIN' WEST BY MYSELF!



BUT HARE AND DEVOL SPENT A LOT OF TIME AWAY FROM THE HIDEOUT, RETURNING LATE EACH NIGHT WITH LOOT FROM THEIR BANDITRY! WITHIN TWO WEEKS, SAM MITCH WAS CHAFING AT THE BIT!

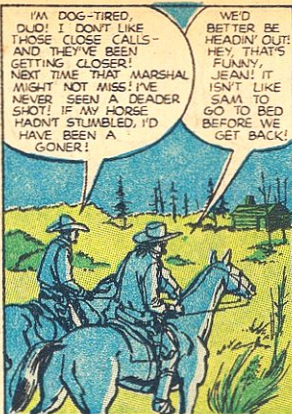
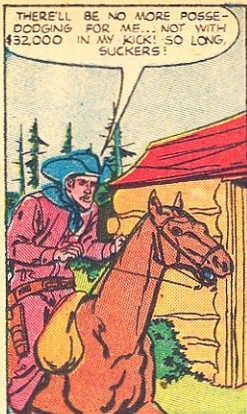
ALL I SEEM TO BE DOIN' 'E PLAYIN' WATCHDOG WHILE THEY PILE UP THEIR STRONGBOXES! HOW DO I KNOW THEY'LL DIVVY WHEN THE TIME COMES...?

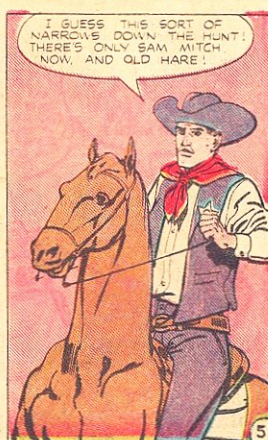


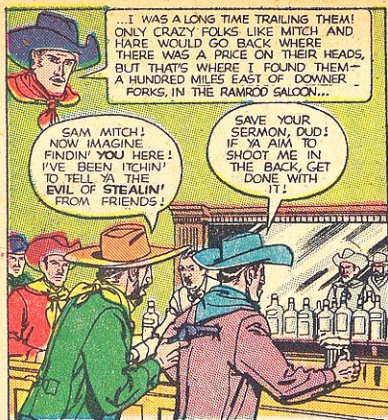
IF THEY DECIDE I HAVEN'T GOT ANY MORE COMIN' TO ME, I'LL BE THE GOAT! I'M NOT WAITIN' AROUND FOR THAT TO HAPPEN!



I CAN GET A GOOD START ON 'EM! I'LL GO BACK TO MISSOURI! THEY WON'T THINK I HEADED BACK THAT WAY BECAUSE THE LAW'S LOOKIN' FOR US THERE! I'LL BE THEY WON'T RECOGNIZE ME IN DOWNER FORKS IF I TRAVEL ALONE!



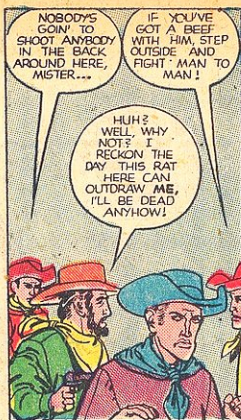




... I WAS A LONG TIME TRAILING THEM! ONLY CRAZY FOLKS LIKE MITCH AND HARE WOULD GO BACK WHERE THERE WAS A PRICE ON THEIR HEADS, BUT THAT'S WHERE I FOUND THEM - A HUNDRED MILES EAST OF DOWNER FORKS, IN THE RAMROD SALOON...

SAM MITCH! NOW IMAGINE FINDIN' YOU HERE! I'VE BEEN ITCHIN' TO TELL YA THE EVIL OF STEALIN' FROM FRIENDS!

SAVE YOUR SERMON, DUD! IF YA AIM TO SHOOT ME IN THE BACK, GET DONE WITH IT!



NOBODY'S GONN TO SHOOT ANOBODY IN THE BACK AROUND HERE, MISTER...

IF YOU'VE GOT A BEEF WITH HIM, STEP OUTSIDE AND FIGHT 'EM MAN TO MAN!

HUH? WELL, WHY NOT? I RECKON THE DAY THIS RAT HERE CAN OUTDRAW ME, I'LL BE DEAD ANYHOW!



IT'S TOO BAD THEY INTERFERED, SAM - YOU'D BE ALL NICE AND DEAD BY NOW!

LOOK, DUD, I'VE GOT MOST OF THE MONEY IF YA WANT TO SPLIT!



GET MOVIN', BOY! I'VE BEEN WAITIN' TOO LONG FOR THIS MOMENT TO LET EITHER OF 'EM CHEAT A HANGMAN LIKE THAT!

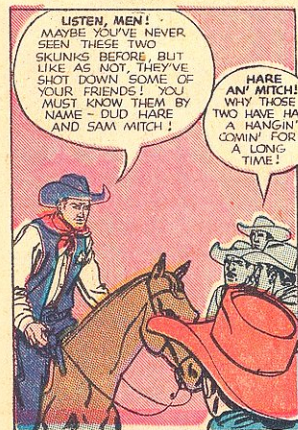


TOSS OVER THOSE TWO GUNS! THIS IS THE END OF THE ROAD FOR YOU TWO!

YA CAN'T BREAK UP A FAIR AN' SQUARE GUN FIGHT...

C-CASS!!

MISTER, IF YOU'RE SMART, YA WONT STICK YOUR NOSE IN WITHOUT AN INVITATION!



LISTEN, MEN! - MAYBE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN THESE TWO SKUNKS BEFORE, BUT LIKE AS NOT, THEY'VE SHOT DOWN SOME OF YOUR FRIENDS! YOU MUST KNOW THEM BY NAME - DUD HARE AND SAM MITCH!

HARE AN' MITCH! WHY THOSE TWO HAVE HAD A HANGIN' DOWN FOR A LONG TIME!



IF THERE'S TO BE A HANGIN', WE'RE TOO DELICATE TO STAY HERE AND WATCH IT! IF ANYBODY MOVES, THESE TWO OLD GEEZERS GET IT IN THE BACK...



USING THE TWO OLD MEN AS SHIELDS, HARE AND MITCH GOT TO THEIR HORSES...



DUD, I-
I'M AFRAID OF
SHERIFF CASS
LIKE I'VE NEVER
BEEN AFRAID OF
ANY
MAN!

MAYBE
THAT'S BECAUSE
HE ISN'T AFRAID
OF US! SAM, IF
WE'RE GOIN' TO BE
PARTNERS AGAIN, I'LL
TAKE YA UP ON
THAT OFFER TO
SPLIT THE
MONEY!



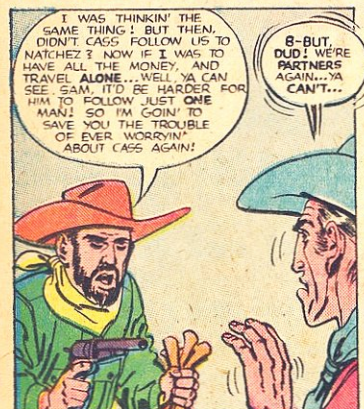
WHAT ABOUT DEVOL, DUD? I'VE
GOT HIS SHARE, TOO - MAYBE
WE CAN CUT HIM OUT!

NO NEED
FOR THAT, SAM!
I WAS STILL NEAR
NATCHEZ WHEN CASS
CAUGHT UP WITH
JEAN! WHERE HAVE
YA GOT THE MONEY
HID, SAM?



HAVE YOU
THOUGHT OF
GOIN' TO THE
OLD HIDEOUT,
SAM!

IF CASS IS
THAT SET ON
FINDIN' US, WE'D
BETTER GET OUT
OF MISSOUR!



I WAS THINKIN' THE
SAME THING! BUT THEN,
DIDN'T CASS FOLLOW US TO
NATCHEZ? NOW IF I WAS TO
HAVE ALL THE MONEY, AND
TRAVEL ALONE... WELL YA CAN
SEE SAM, IT'D BE HARDER FOR
HIM TO FOLLOW JUST ONE
MAN! SO I'M GOIN' TO
SAVE YOU THE TROUBLE
OF EVER WORRYIN'
ABOUT CASS AGAIN!

8-BUT, DUD! WE'RE
PARTNERS
AGAIN... YA
CAN'T...



THAT WAS A BIG
HELP, HARE - SHOOTING
SAM MITCH, I MEAN!
DON'T THINK WE
COULD'VE FOUND YOU
IF WE HADN'T
HEARD YOUR
GUNSHOT!

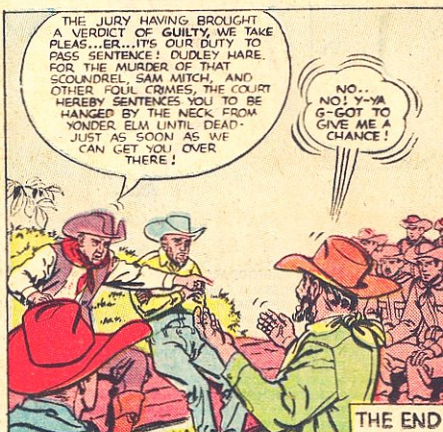
G-GO EASY
WITH ME, FELLERS!
I SAVED YA THE
TROUBLE OF HANGIN'
MITCH! HE WAS THE
REAL KILLER!

WE'VE GOT A
JURY ALL READY
TO DECIDE THAT,
DUD HARE! WHAT'S
MORE, WE'RE TRYIN'
YA FOR MITCH'S
MURDER TOO!



THEY'RE
NOT GOIN' TO
GIVE ME A
CHANCE, SHERIFF!
I'M GOOD AS
AS HUNG
NOW!

YOU'LL
GET MORE
CHANCE THAN
MITCH DID!
YOU'RE EVEN
GETTING TWO
JUDGES!

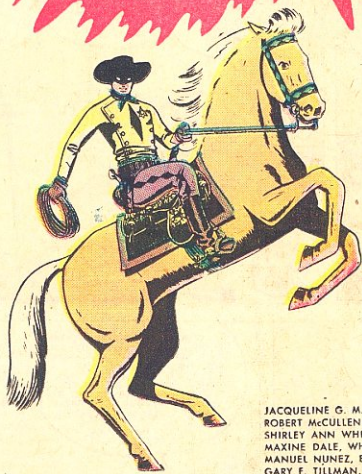


THE JURY HAVING BROUGHT
A VERDICT OF GUILTY, WE TAKE
PLEAS... ER... IT'S OUR DUTY
TO PASS SENTENCE! DUDLEY HARE,
FOR THE MURDER OF THAT
SCOUNDREL, SAM MITCH, AND
OTHER FOUR CRIMES, THE COURT
HEREBY SENTENCES YOU TO BE
HANGED BY THE NECK, FROM
YONDER ELM, UNTIL DEAD -
JUST AS SOON AS WE
CAN GET YOU OVER
THERE!

NO...
NO! Y-YA
G-GOT TO
GIVE ME A
CHANCE!

THE END

Announcing
**THE BLACK DIAMOND
 CONTEST
 WINNERS!**



JOSEPH R. STODDARD, Buffalo, N. Y.
 JAMES RUSSELL, Canonsburg, Penna.
 SIDNEY GEORGE, Hawley, Newfoundland
 MANUEL WAYNE RAZO, JR., San Francisco, Calif.
 THOMAS W. NICHOLSON, Clearbrook, Va.
 CLARENCE MELLO, Fall River, Mass.
 EUGENE O'DONNELL, St. Louis, Mo.
 JOHNNY BRADSHAW, Norfolk, Va.
 RICHARD SCHNEIDER, Greensboro, North Carolina
 JIMMY TERRY BECK, Winston-Salem, No. Carolina
 KEN M. CUBILO, Alpena, Mich.
 PVT. ALLEN G. CLOSSON, Fort Dix, New Jersey

JACQUELINE G. M. LANG, Buffalo, N. Y.
 ROBERT McCULLEN, Chicago 17, Ill.
 SHIRLEY ANN WHITTENTON, Coats, No. Carolina
 MAXINE DALE, Whitestone, Ga.
 MANUEL NUÑEZ, El Paso, Texas
 GARY F. TILLMAN, Mt. Olive, No. Carolina
 ROBERTA ELLISON, Connersville, Ind.
 OBBIE BLANTON, JR., Wilmington, N. C.
 ROBERT M. KEULER, Chilton, Wis.
 ESSIE B. HIGGINS, Oakland 70, Calif.
 DON WEERSING, Denton, Texas
 JEANNETTE DARVILLE, Yonkers, New York
 LOYD SMALLALLWOOD, Middlesboro, Kentucky
 WENDELL HANNIS, Nashville, Tenn.
 BETTY JANE WESTBERRY, Phila., Penna.
 REGINALD HALL, Chester, Penna.
 SHIRLEY SOLOMON, Rosenberg, Texas
 ROBERT E. JOYNER, Portsmouth, Va.
 WILLE GIBSON, Mullins, S. C.
 SANDRA EDWARDS, Savannah, Ga.
 RUBY MAE BYRD, Detroit, Michigan
 CLEDDA HAYES, Louisville, Kentucky

\$1500 IN CASH
"RELIAPOL"

To the thousands of con-
 entries were remarkably

★ **1ST PRIZE**
 FOR HIS

... AND HERE ARE
BLACK DIAMOND

★ **2ND PRIZE** OF \$1

★ **3rd PRIZE** OF \$25 GO

★ **4th PRIZE** OF \$5 GOE

MURRAY WEINER, New York, N. Y.
 STELLA STRATOTOTI, Philadelphia, Penna.
 CHARLES REEP, JR., Eldorado, Kansas
 CARL BROADNAX, Leaksville, No. Carolina
 RONALD CORNELIUS BURKE, Wilmington 30, Dela.
 WILLIAM SWINAMER, JR., Cambridge, Mass.
 MRS. EVELYN MORGANSKI, Chicago, Illinois

5th PRIZ

SHIRLEY CLENDENEN, Pitsley, Calif.
 BARBEE HART, N. Shville, Tenn.
 CORALEE MILLES, Corpus Christi, Texas
 BLANCHIE SMITH, Goshen, Va.
 ROBERT TWEET, Sioux City, Iowa
 LINDA ANGELO, Lockport, New York
 MARY TOMASIK, West Warwick, R. I.
 ROCCO FARINA, JR., Pittsfield, Mass.
 HENRY GONZALEZ, New York, N. Y.
 DOUGLAS JACKSON, Huntsville, Ala.
 WILLIAM J. PRICE, Detroit 3, Mich.
 EDDIE SAENZ, Bakersfield, Calif.
 DOROTHY TOOMER, Berlin, N. J.
 CAROL GOLD, Boston 24, Mass.
 BASIL FINLAN, Niagara Falls, N. Y.
 BOBBY BRATTON, Glassport, Penna.
 JAMES HAIRSTON, Kansas City, Missouri
 ELIZABETH KEMERY, Reading, Penna.
 IONA ELIZABETH KISS, Maplewood, New Jersey
 IRENE KNIGHT, Chicago, Ill.
 JIMMY WEEKEY, Hannibal, Missouri
 DALE MINNICH, Coral Gables, Fla.

\$1500 IN CASH PRIZES — WE HOPE YOU ARE AMONG THE LUCKY WINNERS!

"RELIAPON" IS THE PRIZE-WINNING NAME OF BLACK DIAMOND'S HORSE!

To the thousands of contestants who entered, we extend congratulations! ALL of the entries were remarkably good! The winners, of course, were sensationally superlative!

★ 1ST PRIZE OF \$1,000 GOES TO ALBERT B. MANSKI BOSTON, MASS.

FOR HIS CHOICE OF THE NAME "RELIAPON"

... AND HERE ARE THE OTHER PRIZE-WINNERS IN THE BIG BLACK DIAMOND CONTEST. The cash prizes have been mailed.

★ 2ND PRIZE OF \$100 GOES TO PAULINE WININGER, PENNINGTON GAP VIRGINIA

★ 3rd PRIZE OF \$25 Goes To

JEROME GOLDMAN
Oklahoma City, Okla.

JIM MEEK
Portland, Oregon

DON B. JENSEN
Selina, Utah

DON TAYLOR
Coral Gables, Fla.

★ 4th PRIZE of \$5 Goes To

MURRAY WEINER, New York, N. Y.
STELLA STRATOTOTI, Philadelphia, Penna.
CHARLES REEP, JR., Eldorado, Kansas
CARL BROADNAX, Leaksville, No. Carolina
RONALD CORNELIUS BURKE, Wilmington 30, Dela.
WILLIAM SWINAMER, JR., Cambridge, Mass.
MRS. EVELYN MORGANSKI, Chicago, Illinois

MICHAEL OWENS, Worcester, Mass.
MARIE RIDER, Mechanicsburg, Penna.
BETTY MAE CROCK, New Bedford, Mass.
MRS. JANE HOLCOMB, Los Angeles 42, Calif.
FREDDIE STRATMAN, San Diego, Calif.
DONALD EDWARD FAERY, Arlington, Va.

RICHARD L. HAYNIE, Hays, Kansas
CHARLES MATHISON, JR., Malden 48, Mass.
LARRY T&D, St. Joseph, Mo.
DUANE LUNDGREN, Eagle Lake, Minn.
JIMMY VOGEL, Fayetteville, North Carolina
REVA JESSIE, Coalwood, W. Va.
ALLAN C. DIETZ, Winston-Salem, No. Carolina

5th PRIZE of \$2

SHIRLEY CLENDENEN, Pixley, Calif.
BARBEE HART, Nashville, Tenn.
CORALEE MILLER, Corpus Christi, Texas
BLANCHIE SMITH, Goshen, Va.
ROBERT TWEET, Sioux City, Iowa
LINDA ANGELO, Lockport, New York
LYNDA TOMASIK, West Warwick, R. I.
ROCCO FARINA, JR., Pittsfield, Mass.
HENRY GONZALEZ, New York, N. Y.
DOUGHLAS JACKSON, Huntsville, Ala.
WILLIAM J. PRICE, Detroit 3, Mich.
EDDIE SAENZ, Bakersfield, Calif.
DOROTHY TOOMER, Berlin, N. J.
CAROL GOLD, Boston 24, Mass.
BASIL FINLAN, Niagara Falls, N. Y.
BOBBY BRATTON, Glassport, Penna.
JAMES HAIRSTON, Kansas City, Missouri
ELIZABETH KEIMYER, Reading, Penna.
HONA ELIZABETH KISS, Maplewood, New Jersey
IRENE KNIGHT, Chicago, Ill.
JIMMY WEEKEY, Hannibal, Missouri
DALE MINNICH, Coral Gables, Fla.

ALBERT NOBILE, Providence, R. I.
BONNIE FISHER, Wisconsin Dells, Wisc.
FLORENCE W. MYERS, El Paso, Texas
RICHARD PAUL SIMMONS, Bridgeport 6, Conn.
MRS. LINDA CAVALLARO, Clarksburg, W. Va.
MRS. HELEN HOOPER, Ishpeming, Mich.
JEROME GOLDMAN, Oklahoma City, Okla.
RUFORD ROBERTS, Americus, Ga.
FRANCIS B. LEBIEDZINSKI, South Bend, Ind.
P. C. J. L. MOOREFIELD, Stewart Flid., Nebg., N. Y.
ROBERT HADEN, Mount Vernon, N. Y.
MARIO DUCOURDAY, New York, N. Y.
ROGER BRAY, Logan, Ohio
ANNIE TROBLED, El Paso, Texas
J. A. HOWELL, Charlotte, Amalie, St. Thomas, V.I.
WILLIAM SWINAMER, JR., Cambridge, Mass.
RICHARD LEE THAYER, E. Natick, Mass.
AILENE BROADNAX, Leaksville, No. Carolina
JIMMY NATZKE, Merrill, Wisc.
ALBERTA JACKSON, New Orleans, La.
ALVIN CRAWFORD, Charlottesville, Va.
RICHARD GILMARE, Beatrice, Nebraska

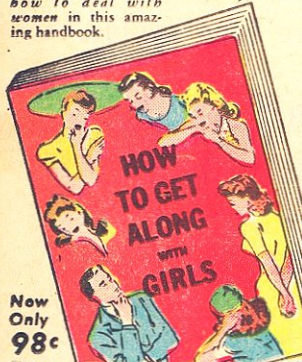
GEORGE W. MYERS, El Paso, Texas
JOSEPH WALKER, Trenton, N. J.
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KENNETH GREAVYER, Lost Creek, W. Va.
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STAMP PAGE

by SIDNEY M. ELIAS

Why Save Stamps?

HAVE you ever heard someone say "Why do you save stamps?" or "Why do you spend money for stamps that are already cancelled?" Perhaps you have heard the same thing said in a different way however, the following will give you an idea of why others save stamps.

Stamp collecting is the most popular hobby among men, women and children of all walks of life. Kings, presidents, bankers, bootblacks, and the kid around the corner, all have a common interest in stamps. Its their hobby and they get many hours of pleasure from their collections whether it be in a handsome leather bound album or a dime notebook.

To the boy collector, large colorful pictorials, odd shapes or stamps from far away places may meet his fancy. The adult collector may go in for rare errors or advanced stamps. But, no matter whether it is the boy who spends a few pennies for his stamps or the adult who spends many dollars, the interest in their hobby is the same.

It is fascinating to the boy collector to obtain stamps from far away places for he pictures in his mind the distances in which the stamp may have travelled. Perhaps it was carried by a native, then transferred to a camel or donkey, then on a steamer or even an airplane, and finally to end up in his collection. If stamps could talk each one could tell a most interesting story.

Aside from being a hobby, the collecting of stamps is very educational and profitable. From the designs pictured on them, one can get an interesting idea of the history and geography of a country; its agricultural products and mineral resources; its language and monetary units; and a general idea of its cities and people.

In general, the collecting of stamps provides one with an interesting hobby affording many hours of pleasure and at the same time gives one a liberal education.

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RUSTLER'S REWARD

THE SMASHING
TALE OF A
CARDSHARK AND
GUNMAN WHO
LAUGHED AT
TEXAS LAW!



TEXAS LAW? HECK, LON SPADE HAILED FROM OKLAHOMA, SO THE LAWS OF THE LONE STAR STATE DIDN'T MEAN A HOOT TO A TOP-STRING CATTLE RUSTLER LIKE HIM! BUT THOUGH SPADE CUT CARDS WITH A STACKED DECK, HIS LONG BADLANDS TRAIL WAS NEARING AN END!

WHAT DO YOU SAY, OLD TIMER? IS IT A BET?

SURE SPADE! I'LL PUT UP MY RANCH! IT'S GOT A THOUSAND ACRES OF THE BEST GRAZIN' LAND IN THE VALLEY!



LON SPADE



TERRY RUSH



SHERIFF TYLER



BOONE AND RUFF

ART BY
FRED GUARDINEER

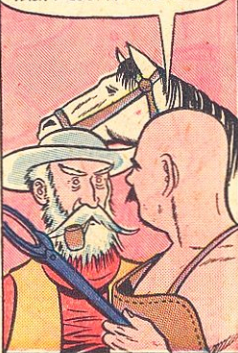
TERRY RUSH WAS CROWDING SIXTY... A GNAARLED OLD RANCHER, SLOW-SPOKEN AND EVEN-TEMPERED! LONELINESS HAD GOTTEN RUSH INTO THE HABIT OF COMING TO TOWN—AND THERE WASN'T MUCH TO DO AT NIGHT IN A TEXAS COWTOWN IN 1884 BUT DRINK AND PLAY POKER!

DO YOU FIGURE TO SIT IN ON THE GAME TONIGHT, TERRY?

I RECKON SO, CAL!

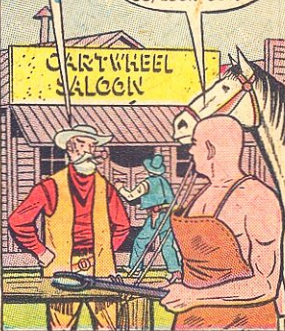


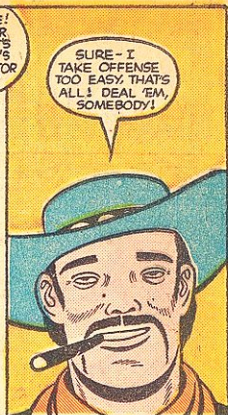
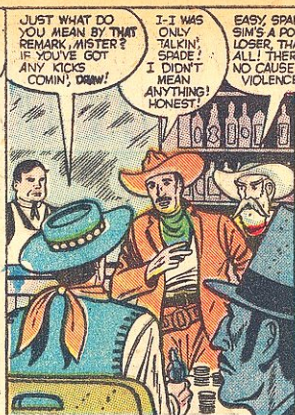
THEN YOU'D BETTER BE ON YOUR TOES! MIND YOU, I'M NOT ACCUSIN' ANYBODY—BUT THERE'S A STRANGER PLAYIN' AND HE HASN'T LOST A HAND YET!



A STRANGER? WHAT'S HIS NAME?

HE GOES BY TH' HANDLE OF LON SPADE! JUDGIN' FROM HIS HANDS, I'D SAY HE'S NO STRANGER TO A DECK OF CARDS OR A SIX-GUN! SO, LOOK OUT!

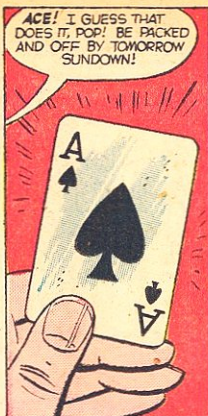






JACK!

JACK!



ACE! I GUESS THAT DOES IT, POP! BE PACKED AND OFF BY TOMORROW SUNDOWN!



A BOX CANYON AND ALL! THIS SPREAD IS PERFECT FOR RUSTLIN! IN NO TIME AT ALL, I COULD BUILD UP A STOLEN HERD OF TEN THOUSAND HEADS, AND I KNOW JUST THE TWO MAVERICKS TO HELP ME DO IT!



ALL YOU BOYS HAVE TO DO IS GET SOME HANDS TOGETHER, RUSTLE A FEW THOUSAND HEADS AND START DRIVING 'EM MY WAY!

THAT SOUNDS JUST LIKE YOU, SPADE! AS USUAL, BOONE AND ME TAKE ALL THE CHANCES!

WRONG! YOU AND BOONE GET PAID OFF IN SILVER-I'M LEFT HOLDING A LOT OF TEXAS CATTLE-MAYBE GET SENT TO THE PEN FOR RUSTLIN' WHILE YOU HOMBRES RIDE AWAY WITH YOUR POCKETS CRAMMED FULL OF JACK!

GRAB YOUR CRYIN' TOWEL, SPADE-DON'T WEEP ANY TEARS ON US!

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE BOYS WE HIRE FOR THE TRAIL DRIVE! WE NEED A WRANGLER, A COOK, AND ABOUT FIVE RIDERS! IT'S A TWO-WEEK DRIVE TO YOUR SPREAD!

WE SHOOT 'EM, DON'T WE SPADE? DEAD MEN DON'T TALK, HUH?



I'LL BE LOOKIN' FOR YOU IN, SAY THREE WEEKS-BE THERE!

JUST SEE TO IT YOU'RE THERE! BOONE AND ME DON'T TAKE KINDLY TO A RUN-OUT OR FANCY WORDS!



RUFF DOESN'T TRUST YOU ANY, AND HE'S BEEN BOTHERIN' ME TOO-ALWAYS JOKIN' ABOUT MY NEEDIN' A BATH! HOW MUCH IS IT WORTH TO YOU TO GET RID OF HIM?

NOT EVEN A PESO, BOONE, TILL RUFF GETS HIS JOB DONE! THEN I'LL MAKE IT WORTH YOUR TROUBLE!

FOR A MONTH LON SPADE HAD LOOKED THROUGH HIS TELESCOPE ...LOOKED AND CURSED! FINALLY, THE SLOW-MOVING TRAIL HERD TOPPED THE SKYLINE!

RUFF AND BOONE ARE A WEEK LATE, BLAST IT, BUT BETTER LATE THAN NEVER!



THEY'VE REACHED THE FORD! THAT MEANS THE HERD'LL BE HERE BY SUNDOWN - WHICH WILL GIVE ME ALL DAY TO PLAN A PROPER RECEPTION!



THOSE TRAIL RIDERS WOULD RATHER DRINK BOOZE THAN EAT BEANS AND SOURDOUGH! BY SUNDOWN THAT WHOLE CREW WILL BE DRUNKER THAN HOOT OWLS - DRUNK AND READY FOR SLAUGHTER...RUFF AND BOONE NOT EXCEPTED!



THE HERD'S BEDDING DOWN, AND THERE'S ONLY ONE CHORE TO BE TENDED TO NOW, RUFF!

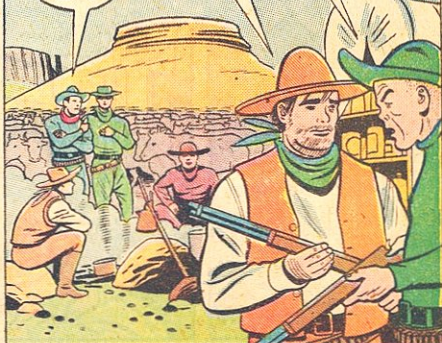
AND NOW'S AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY! WE'LL MAKE VULTURE-BAIT OUTTA THEM, AS SOON AS THEY MAKE CAMP!



SUPPER'LL BE READY IN NO-TIME, RUFF!

NOW?

NOW!



YOU CAN HAVE THE COOK'S BANJO, RUFF!

YOU'RE WELCOME TO ALL YOU GOT! IT'S BAD LUCK ROBBIN' A DEAD MAN!



YOU DID YOUR SHARE AN' YOU MIGHT AS WELL GET WHAT YOU WANT!

IT'S MY EARNED MONEY I WANT! SPADE BETTER SHOW UP AN' RIGHT SOON!





DO YOU THINK SPADE'S NOT GOIN' TO PAY FOR THIS JOB-PLAYIN' HIS BIG DOG WHILE WE DO HIS DIRTY WORK? HE WEARS BUCKSKIN GLOVES, SO'S TO KEEP HIS LILY-WHITE HANDS CLEAN! LOOK AT MINE!



I DON'T WANT TO LOOK AT YOUR ROTTEN HANDS, BOONE! I'VE GOT A STRONG STOMACH, BUT THOSE HANDS OF YOURS WOULD MAKE A BUZZARD SICK!

QUIT PUTTIN' ON AIRS! YOU'RE WANTED FOR MURDER IN JUST AS MANY PLACES AS I AM!



LATER... STILL CURSIN' ME OUT, BOONE? MAYBE ONE OF THESE TIMES YOU'LL GET NERVE ENOUGH TO DIG THAT IRON OUT OF YOUR BELT!

H-HIYA, SPADE! NEVER MEANT IT!



YOU KNOW I ALWAYS RUN OFF AT THE MOUTH WHEN I DRINK, SPADE! YOU WOULDN'T KILL ME FOR THAT, WOULD YOU?

GRAB YOURSELF A SHOVEL, BOONE! BACK YONDER IS SOFT EARTH! I DON'T WANT ANY EVIDENCE AROUND, SO GET GOIN'! AND DON'T GET ANY BIG IDEAS!



THERE'D BE NO AVERAGE IN YOUR BUSHWHACKIN' ME, RUFF! YOU'D NEVER LOCATE THE MONEY I CACHED, AND YOU'D GET STRUNG UP BY THE LAW FOR RUSTLIN' THOSE CATTLE!

SINCE WHEN ARE YOU WORKIN' WITH THE LAW, SPADE?



SINCE I CAME UP HERE AND WON THIS SPREAD! AS FAR AS ANYONE KNOWS, I'M AN HONEST RANCHER! THE WHOLE DEAL DEPENDS ON IT STAYING THAT WAY!

IT WILL AS LONG AS BOONE AND ME GET OUR DOUGH, SPADE!



WHEN BOONE GETS DONE WITH HIS CHORE, WE'LL HAVE AN ACCOUNTING! WHAT ABOUT THE HERD - HAVE YOU CHANGED ALL THE BRANDS TO MY DOUBLE B?

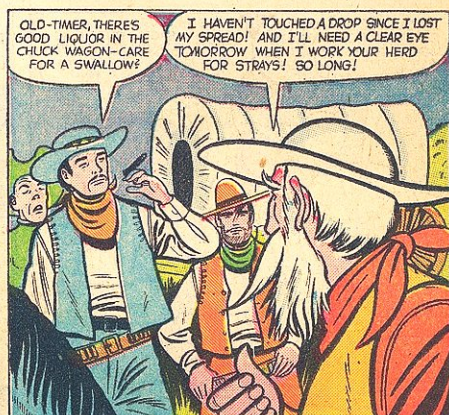
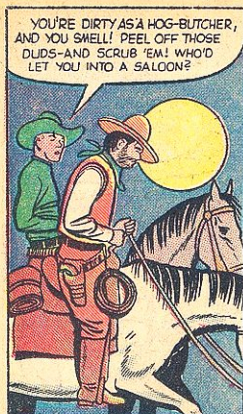
THERE'S A FEW HEAD WE MIGHT HAVE MISSED! IT MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEA TO DO SOME BRAND-CHANGING BEFORE SOME SNOOPER SHOWS UP!



THAT'S ALL WE CAN DO TONIGHT! IT'S TOO DARK!

I'M THIRSTY! I NEED SOME ROTGUT!

THERE MUST BE AT LEAST ANOTHER HUNDRED LEFT! WE'LL WORK ALL DAY TOMORROW!



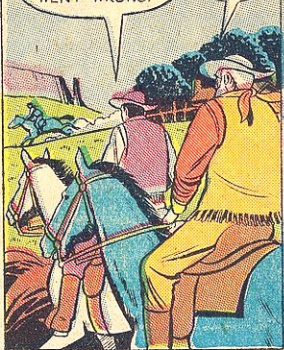


DON'T STAND THERE LIKE SOME COW WAITING TO BE MILKED! THEY'RE JUST A COUPLE OF HIRED HANDS WHO WERE GONNA KILL US! WE'RE GOIN' UP AGAINST AN EXPERT NOW!



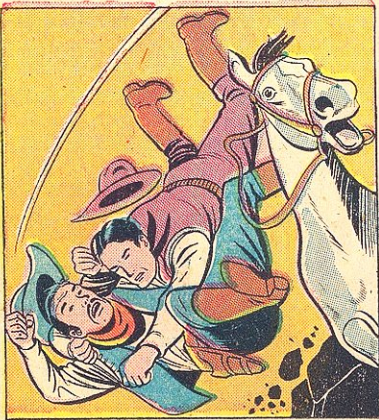
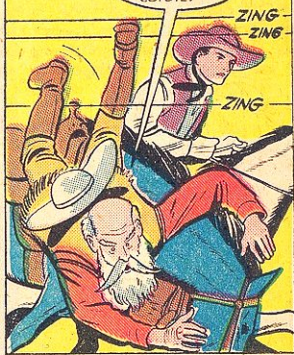
HE'S LIGHTIN' OUT! HE MUST'VE FIGURED SOMETHIN' WENT WRONG!

AFTER HIM!



KEEP GOIN'! HE HIT MY HORSE—GET THE RUSTLIN' COYOTE!

ZING—
ZING—
ZING



HE'S DEAD! HE CRACKED HIS HEAD ON A ROCK!



YOU'RE CUT, SON!

IT'S NOT DEEP! ANYWAY, SPADE'S DEAD, AND YOU'LL BE MIGHTY INTERESTED IN THESE CARDS HE HAD...THEY'RE MARKED! A JURY 'D SAY THIS RANCH WAS STILL YOURS, SIR, SEEIN' AS HOW SPADE CHEATED YOU!



I ALWAYS THOUGHT HE CHEATED, BUT I COULDN'T SEE A WAY TO PROVE IT! HERE, LET ME TIE A KNOT AROUND THAT ARM, SON!

THANKS! AND NOW I KNOW I CAN'T SEE A WAY TO PIN THIS DEPUTY'S STAR ON! IT'S YOURS, RUSH! YOU EARNED IT TODAY!



THE END

THE CLUE IN THE I. O. U.

HOW did the feud between Corey and Big Joe start? No one who thought much of his health would think of asking either of them. By talking to half the population of Red Creek a stranger might be able to piece some of the background together.

"I won't interfere with Big Joe," Sheriff Martine would say. "I remember a time up in Fayette County when they both were courtin' Old Man Giller's daughter. I was spendin' the day with Giller when Big Joe and Corey came to call on Maggie at the same time. They started blusterin' each other at the ranch gate, and by the time they reached the front door, the air was blue with insults. By the time the dust cleared, Corey was out cold, Big Joe had two black eyes and a broken finger—and Maggie wasn't speakin' to either of them."

"That's not a patch on the time they were sittin' at a poker table together," added Doc Becker, who ran the saloon. "Five hands hadn't gone by before Corey accused Big Joe of stackin' the deck. So Big Joe stood up and drilled five holes clean through the cards in Corey's hand. 'Them marked cards of yours ain't clear enough, Corey!' he says. *That* fight almost wrecked my saloon forever!"

There were a few points on which everyone in town agreed. Both Big Joe and Corey were a match on the draw. Both of them could out-ride and out-fight all comers. Big Joe had the advantage in size, but Corey made up for it in muscle. And scarcely a month went by without some trifling occasion which set them testing their brawn and brain against one another.

One afternoon, Big Joe was sitting on the hotel veranda, watching the bustling Saturday scene of the cow town and chatting with Sheriff Martine. Suddenly he shouted "Well, for Pete's sake! Look at the dude!" He pointed jeeringly down the block, where Corey, dazzling in a new red silk shirt and ten-gallon hat, was slowly walking his horse.

"Look at the dude, will ya!" Big Joe howled. "Where did ya get those trappings—steal them?"

Corey stopped in front of the hotel and glared at Big Joe. "I won this gear fair and square in a poker game. And just because you ain't got the trainin' to change your shirt more'n once in three years..." He was furious. The outfit he had been so proud of was becoming the butt of a joke. "You dirty matchstick! The barn you came out of would be ashamed of you!"

"At least they wouldn't mistake me for no Christmas tree!" Big Joe yelled in glee. "You oughtta rent a store and have everybody come in and take a look at you for ten cents a head!"

The crowd that had gathered to watch the argument was now laughing with Big Joe. Corey's face was set in anger. His clothing made a clown of him, instead of a man to envy.

"Call me a cheater, will ya!" he muttered. "I'll cheat you, all right—right outta what you're sittin' on!" And Corey pulled out his gun and

nearly drilled six bullets into the posts that supported the railing Big Joe was sitting on.

But Big Joe, still laughing, jumped back on the porch, picked up a chair and heaved it right into an enormous mud puddle in front of Corey's horse. The mud splashed high in the air. It dripped from Corey's clean new hat right onto the bright new shirt, all over the splendid saddle and bridle and the crowd roared.

"Why, you..." Corey's rage was at top pitch. He struggled to get the frightened horse under control. He could fight anybody or anything—but he couldn't fight ridicule. Deciding the best thing to do was to leave and settle with Big Joe later, he galloped down the street, the laughter still ringing in his ears.

Sheriff Martine finally stopped chuckling. "You shouldn't have done that, Big Joe," he said weakly. "Fightin' with Corey is one thing—but shamin' him is another."

"There's nothin' *he* can do that *I* can't take care of!" laughed Big Joe, still happy over his triumph. "And it'll be a long time before Corey can set foot in this town without a red face!"

"That's exactly what I mean," the sheriff said quietly. "You've hurt his pride."

Corey put in an appearance in town a week later, ready for his usual Saturday night poker game. As he strode into the saloon, a huge laugh greeted him, for he now was wearing his old clothes. Big Joe looked up from his poker hand. "Well, now," he grinned. "If it ain't pretty boy himself! Didja' have a change of heart?"

"Come on, Joe," Doc Becker muttered angrily. "You're holdin' up the game."

Big Joe laughed again. "What's the matter, boys? You ain't gonna be sore losers, are ya?" He turned to Corey, who was standing behind Doc Becker. "Sit down, pretty boy, and I'll take your money same as I'm takin' it off these suckers! See—full house! Two jacks, three fours!"

Becker cursed, and Tom Skinner, foreman of the Ranch X Bar B, threw down his hand disgustedly. "That finishes me—all I got are a couple of pairs. I don't aim to lose any more."

"Strick around, Skinner," Big Joe advised. "I wanna get paid before you leave."

Skinner rose. "I'll give you an I. O. U. for the money. I ain't got it on me now."

"Okay, Corey," Big Joe said. "Sit down and show the color of your money."

"You *may* have been cleanin' out these guys, you crummy chiseler, but it's your turn now to start losin'!" Corey replied.

"I wouldn't be too sure of that, Corey," Matt Devlin, the fourth man at the table, said bitterly. "He's already taken a thousand dollars off me this week alone. Heaven only knows how much Doc owes him. He's out for blood tonight."

"Things'll change," Corey muttered, as Big Joe cut and dealt out the cards once more.

But things didn't change. Big Joe won and kept on winning. As the night wore on, Corey's pile of chips dwindled while Big Joe's grew.

Big Joe called for a fresh deck. He shuffled the

cards and handed them to Doc. Then he dealt them out, watching the faces of his opponents carefully. "You boys don't look too happy," he declared.

"And why not, you sneakin' cheatin'—!" Matt Devlin burst out. "You—"

Doc Beeker snapped, "Let's play the hand."

Matt's face calmed as he picked up his hand. He stood pat while Big Joe dealt round again. The chips in the kitty began to mount as each man bid up and up. Finally Corey and Doc threw in their hands, while Devlin stayed in. "Okay, Joe," he said smilingly. "I'll raise you fifty and see you, and it looks like I've got you beat this time. I've got a straight." And he triumphantly laid down his cards.

"You don't beat me this time or any other," replied Big Joe. "I've got four fives."

Devlin jumped up. "Let's see them!" And Big Joe gently put them down on the table. "You stacked the deck!" Devlin shrieked. "You're gonna get it now!" He went for his gun, but Big Joe was faster. "I wouldn't do that," Big Joe advised.

Devlin took his hand off his gun. "It looks like we better break this up, boys," Doc Beeker said. "We're gettin' a little too rough."

Everybody watched uneasily as Matt Devlin slowly wrote out an I. O. U. and Corey carefully counted out three hundred dollars and handed it to Big Joe. He strode out of the saloon with Devlin following sullenly.

Doc turned to Big Joe as the two men left the others who had been watching the game went out into the night. "Stick around, Joe. I'll pay you as soon as I get the day's receipts out of the safe."

* * *

They found Big Joe's body behind a house at the end of the street about noon the next day. There were two bullet holes in Joe's back, and in his pockets were found the two I. O. U.s signed by Tom Skinner and Matt Devlin. The money that Corey had paid him, as well as his own money, was gone.

"Do you think it could have been Corey?" Barney Timms, the deputy, asked Martine.

"I dunno," the sheriff replied. "He hated Joe's guts, and had plenty of reasons for killing him. Anyhow, let's get hold of Corey, and then find out what happened at that poker game last night. I dropped in for a spell around midnight, and every guy in the game had murder in his eyes."

An hour later Corey was behind bars, and the sheriff was questioning him. "I went home last night to bed," Corey muttered. "Sure, I hated Joe, but if I'd wanted to kill him, I wouldn't have shot him in the back. I'd have put it to him square, and beat him to the draw."

"From what Doc told me about the game last night, Joe was fast on the draw with Matt Devlin," the sheriff answered.

"Then why don't you ask Matt if he killed Joe—or Tom Skinner, or Doc himself? They all could have shot him. They had good reason to—owed him a lot of money. Why don't you question them?"

"I aim to, son," Martine said quietly. "An' I

aim to do some listenin', too."

With Corey behind bars, the whole town was satisfied that he was the murderer. But the sheriff wasn't so easily satisfied. Doc said he had let Joe out the back way so that he could lock up. Doc hadn't heard any shots. Skinner and Devlin, he established, had gone home to bed, but Devlin might have stuck around and shot Joe as he was leaving. Doc Beeker admitted that Joe had stayed an hour after everyone had gone, but he insisted that he had paid him the money he owed him, and that it probably had been stolen by the murderer, too.

"What do you think, Sheriff?" Barney asked, as Martine sat with his deputy mulling over the evidence. "Doc had plenty of time and chance to kill Joe, but like he says, he certainly wouldn't have asked Joe to stay while everyone was around. He certainly could've waited."

"That's the trouble, Barney. Everyone could've murdered Joe, but everyone would've done it some other way. Bring me those I. O. U.s again."

As Barney opened a desk drawer, the sheriff asked, "No one knows how much Doc owed Joe?"

"Nope," the deputy replied. "Doc says it was about a thousand dollars. Anyway, it couldn't have been too much, 'cause Doc deposited another thousand in the bank this morning. And he had receipts for every penny of it—includin' the thousand he said he paid Joe."

The sheriff thoughtfully studied the two pieces of paper. "I sure can't figure it out." He looked up at his deputy, then noticed a bit of paper Barney was holding gingerly between his thumb and first finger. "Where in tarnation did you get that?" he cried.

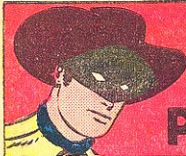
"Why it's just a corner of a piece of paper I found in the same pocket that those I. O. U.s were in. I didn't think it meant anything. It's just a small piece—"

The sheriff thundered, "That little pink corner is the evidence we need to convict our murderer, if we can find the paper it fits into!"

Doc Beeker confessed to killing Big Joe after the sheriff had examined the Saturday night receipts of Doc's saloon and matched the corner to one of the pink receipt slips that Doc used.

"Doc owed Joe about five thousand dollars," the sheriff later explained to his deputy. "He'd already paid him a couple of thousand the week before, but Joe was cleanin' him out. He knew that nobody knew how much he owed Joe, and he also realized that plenty of other people would like to have seen Joe dead. Saturday night after everyone was gone he gave him two thousand, which was all he had in his safe, and an I. O. U. for the rest. Then he ambushed Joe and took Joe's money, but he made his mistake in not leaving the I. O. U. which he had written out on a receipt. He pulled it out so hastily that he left a corner of it. He figured he'd be smart and cross out the I. O. U., leaving Joe's name on it, and by rubbing out one of the zeros he'd make a nice little \$3.00 bill out of it. He was sure no one would examine the receipts too closely, and notice the corner missing. But he made the mistake. Nobody knew how much he owed Joe. He could have left it."

THE END



BLACK DIAMOND'S PAGE OF WESTERN LORE

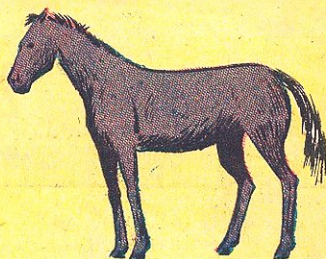
(THE SECOND OF A SERIES)

by
William
OVERGARD

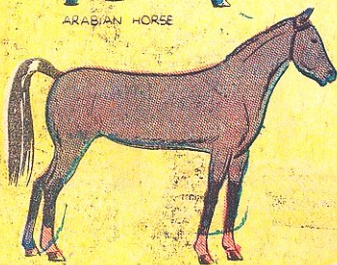
HORSES AND EQUIPMENT



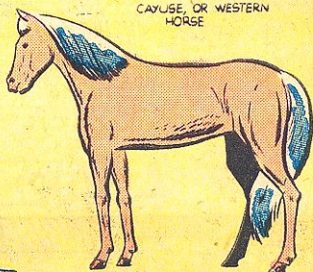
ARABIAN HORSE



CAYUSE, OR WESTERN
HORSE



THOROUGHBRED HORSE



PALOMINO HORSE

SADDLES

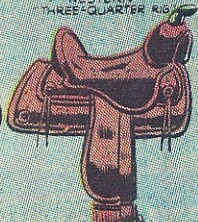
WESTERN
THREE-QUARTER RIG

SPANISH

MEXICAN

INDIAN

ENGLISH



STIRRUPS

BITS

SPURS

BRANDS



OPEN STIRRUP



ARMY SPUR



TAPADERO



SPANISH OR
COWBOY SPUR

BLACK DIAMOND'S
& BOB VALES BRANDS



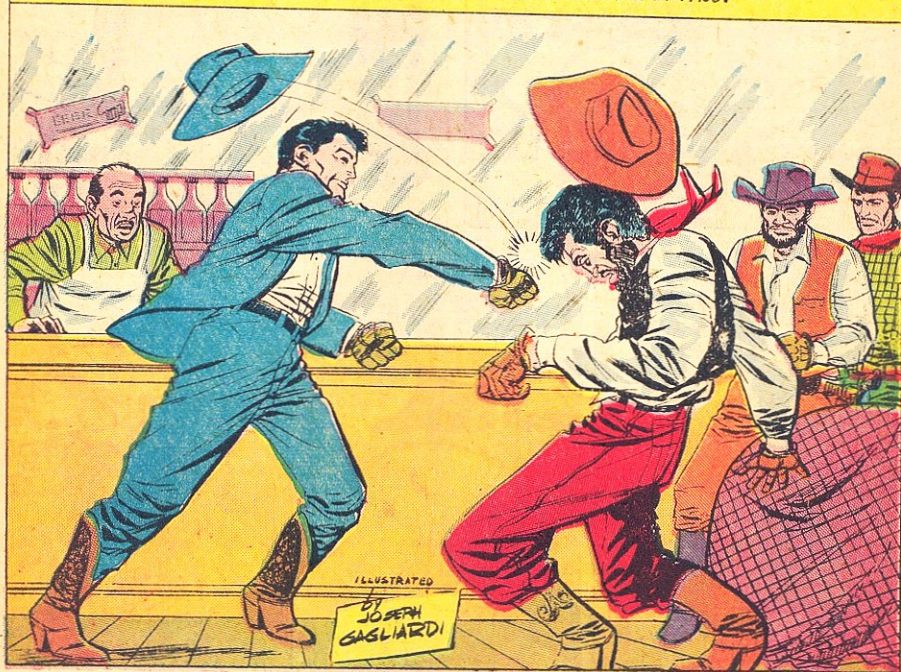
TYPES OF BRAND
MARKS

RUNNING
IRON

HAIR
BRAND

COMPETITION FOR DEATH ON WHEELS!

MARION BRANT WAS A PEACEFUL MAN, BUT NO CUTTHROAT RIVAL COULD KEEP HIS FREIGHTERS FROM COMING OVER THE MOUNTAIN PASS!



BULLWHIP KAIL, THE BEST TEAMSTER OF THE BRANT FREIGHTING CO., PULLED IN HIS TEAM AS IT APPROACHED THE POINT OF DEAD MAN'S CURVE ON MONTANA PASS...



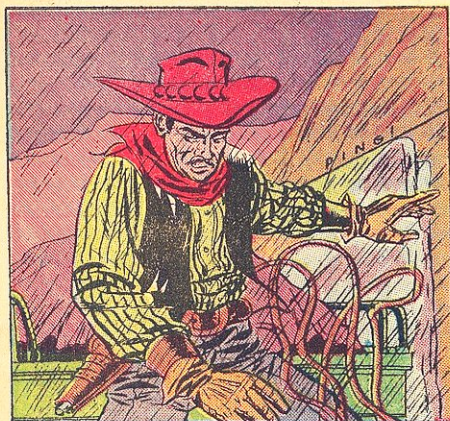
I'D LIKE TO GET INDOORS AS MUCH AS YOU, BUT THIS ISN'T THE PLACE TO MAKE UP TIME!

WHOOA! WHOOA!



RIGHT INTO MY SIGHTS—A FEW MORE WAGONS SPLINTERED ON THE ROCKS BELOW, AND THE BRANT FREIGHTING CO. OUGHTTA BE OUT OF BUSINESS!





IT SHOULDN'T BE TOO HARD FOR THE BOSS TO BUY BRANT OUT SOON! HE CAN'T FILL OUT HIS HAILIN' CONTRACT WITHOUT TEAMS!

LATER, IN TOWN, AT THE OFFICE OF THE BRANT FREIGHTING COMPANY...



THERE'S NO SIGN OF BULLWHIP YET, BRANT!

I COULD UNDERSTAND ANOTHER DRIVER BEING LATE ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS - BUT NOT BULLWHIP! SOMETHING MUST HAVE GONE WRONG!



YOU BET SOMETHING'S WRONG! THE SAME SOMETHING THAT'S BEEN WRECKING YOUR WAGONS AND RUNNING OFF YOUR HORSES - AND THAT SOMETHING IS JESSE LAWTON!

I KNOW HOW YOU AND ALL THE BOYS FEEL, HARP, BUT WE HAVE NO PROOF THAT LAWTON'S BEHIND IT!



NO PROOF? LAWTON'S DRIVER, MIKE TRAVIS, IS OUT MAKING OUT HUNDRED DOLLAR BETS THAT BULLWHIP DOESN'T COME OVER THE PASS TONIGHT! HE KNOWS SOMETHING - I WOULDN'T PUT ANYTHING PAST THAT SNAKE!



I JUST CAME OVER THE PASS, BRANT! IF YOU WERE EXPECTING A WAGON, IT WON'T BE HERE - SHE'S SPLINTERED INTO A MILLION PIECES AT THE BOTTOM OF DEAD MAN'S CURVE!

WHAT!!



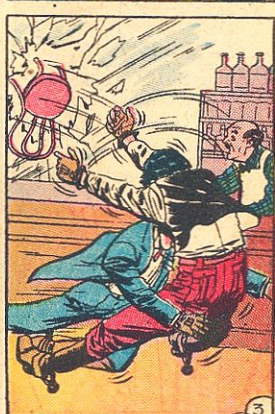
HARP - GET THE CREW TOGETHER AND GET A TEAM READY TO ROLL!

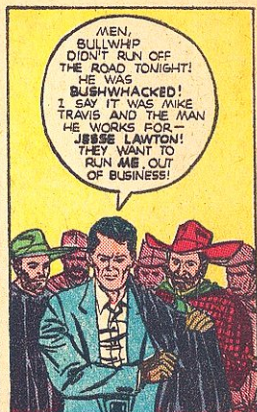
RUSTY, COME WITH ME!

RIGHT, BRANT!

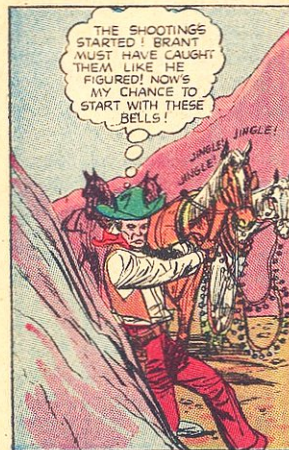


I'LL GIVE THREE YANKS ON THE ROPE IF I NEED HELP! THERE'S NO USE HAVING MORE THAN ONE GOING DOWN THERE!









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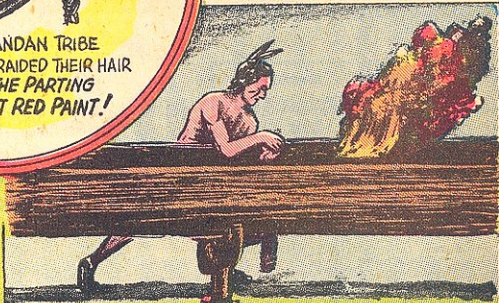
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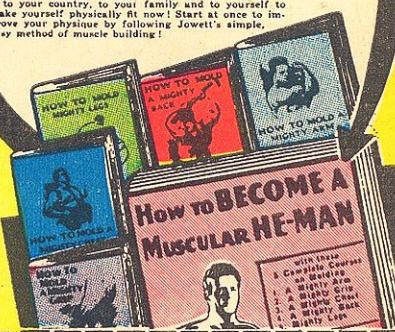
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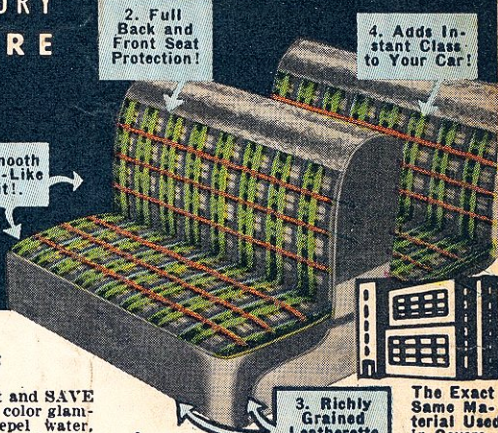
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